

PREVENTION STRATEGIES RELATED TO ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

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Guiding Principles

A National Strategy to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, launched by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1997, identifies the following as research-based principles that are key to promising community efforts (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/teenp/intro.htm>):

1. Parents and other adult mentors must play key roles in encouraging young adults to avoid early pregnancy and to stay in school.
2. Abstinence and personal responsibility must be the primary messages of prevention programs.
3. Young people must be given clear connections and pathways to college or jobs that give them hope and a reason to stay in school and avoid pregnancy.
4. Public and private-sector partners throughout communities — including parents, schools, business, media, health and human service providers, and religious organizations — must work together to develop comprehensive strategies.
5. Real success requires a sustained commitment to the young person over a long period of time.

Evidence-Based Strategies

Douglas Kirby, Ph.D., Chair of the Effective Program and Research Task Force for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, explains that programs with strong evidence of success share all of the following characteristics:

1. a focus on reducing one or more sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancy or HIV/STD infection;
2. are based upon theoretical approaches that have been demonstrated to be effective in influencing other health-related risky behaviors;
3. give a clear message by continually reinforcing a clear stance on these behaviors;
4. provide basic, accurate information about the risks of unprotected intercourse and methods of avoiding unprotected intercourse;
5. include activities that address social pressures on sexual behaviors;
6. provide modeling and practice of communication, negotiation, and refusal skills;
7. employ a variety of teaching methods designed to involve the participants and have them personalize the information;
8. incorporate behavioral goals, teaching methods, and materials that are appropriate to the age, sexual experience, and culture of the students;
9. last a sufficient length of time to complete important activities adequately;
10. select teachers or peers who believe in the program they are implementing and then provide training for those individuals.



Sex Education Programs Covering Both Pregnancy and STD/HIV Infection

- Reducing the Risk is a skills-based program aimed at preventing pregnancy, HIV and STD infection. Targeting 9th and 10th graders, the program is built around 16 lessons that promote abstinence and proper, consistent use of protection as the only ways to avoid pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other STDs. The curriculum also teaches students refusal statements, delay statements and alternative actions that can be used to abstain or protect themselves
(www.neahin.org/programs/reproductive/works/risk.htm).
- Safer Choices is a two-year school-based program beginning in the ninth grade which includes a 20-session classroom curriculum (10 sessions each year). Participating schools also have a Peer Team/Club which plans school-wide activities designed to alter the normative culture at the school
(www.siecus.org/pubs/shop/volume4/shpv40025.html).

HIV Education Programs

- Becoming a Responsible Teen is an HIV prevention curriculum primarily for African American adolescents, ages 14-18, in non-school, community-based settings. It consists of eight sessions, 1.5 to 2 hours each, in which teens learn to clarify their own values about sexual decisions and pressures, practice skills to reduce sexual risk-taking including correct condom use, assertive communication, refusal techniques, self-management, and problem solving. Abstinence is promoted as the best way to prevent HIV infection and pregnancy
(www2.edc.org/NTP/PTW/ptwbart.html).
- Making a Difference: An Abstinence Approach to STD, Teen Pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS Prevention is an eight-module curriculum that provides young adolescents with the knowledge, confidence, and skills necessary to reduce their risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV, and pregnancy by abstaining from sex. It is based on cognitive behavioral theories, focus groups, and the researchers' extensive experience working with youth. Making A Difference! is an adaptation and extension of the original *Be Proud! Be Responsible!* curriculum in that it integrates STD, HIV and pregnancy prevention.



Comprehensive Programs With Intensive Sexuality and Youth Development Components

- Teen Outreach Program (TOP) is a junior high and high school-based program that combines life skills and adolescent reproductive health education with youth involvement in community service. The educational component takes place in small groups under the guidance of a facilitator who also serves as a mentor.
- Children's Aid Society's Family Life and Sex Education Program is a long-term, holistic, multidimensional adolescent sexuality and pregnancy prevention program that targets youth, parents, and other adults. The program incorporates a broad spectrum of strategies and services that include career awareness and exploration, family life and sex education, medical and health services, mental health services, academic assessment, homework help, and guaranteed college admission upon completion of high school and meeting program outcomes.
- Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI) was developed for eighth graders by the Emory University School of Medicine and Grady Memorial Hospital Teen Services Program in Atlanta, Georgia. The curriculum uses older teen educators, nurses and counselors to reach young people. While placing significant emphasis on abstinence, the program also incorporates contraceptive information and decision-making skills.
- Girl Talk is gender-specific, age adapted, and culturally appropriate for teenage Latina and African American women. *Girl Talk* focuses on the strengths of participants and uses peers and adults as group facilitators, mentors, and role models. The program employs diverse educational techniques to help strengthen self-efficacy and peer relationships as well as to enhance self-protective behaviors. The program incorporates community-wide partners including health care agencies, businesses, and schools. Findings indicate that participants increased both their knowledge and self-efficacy.

Resources on the Web

Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention: ReCAPP provides practical skills, strategies, information, and resources for teens, parents, and youth service providers to effectively reduce sexual risk-taking behaviors. The site also provides an overview of model programs.

Web Address: <http://www.etr.org/recapp/>

National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: Main focus is providing information, tools and resources for organizing grassroots coalitions aimed at fostering public



awareness and education to prevent teen pregnancy. Site also provides useful tips for teens, parents and educators.

Web Address: <http://www.teenpregnancy.org>

Advocates for Youth: Information, training, and resources for youth-serving organizations, policy makers, youth activists, and the media aimed at helping young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.

Web Address: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org>

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